



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of the United States Trustee

Districts of New York, Connecticut & Vermont

November 9, 2000

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: BANKRUPTCY PRACTITIONERS

FROM: Carolyn S. Schwartz  
United States Trustee

SUBJECT: Debtor's Social Security Numbers and Identification

**IMPORTANT - 341 MEETING POLICY CHANGE**

**BEGINNING JANUARY 2, 2001, ALL CHAPTER 7 DEBTORS MUST PROVIDE CASE TRUSTEES WITH PICTURE IDENTIFICATION TO VERIFY THEIR IDENTITY AND PROOF OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS.**

Acceptable picture identification includes a valid state-issued drivers license, state-issued picture identification card, passport or legal resident alien card. Acceptable proof of social security number includes a social security card, a current W-2 form or some other official document which shows name and social security number. The 341 meeting **will be** continued to the trustee's next calendar date if a debtor does not have the required identification.

You will be required to file an amended petition to correct social security numbers. In the past year, we have identified many instances of incorrect social security numbers on bankruptcy petitions. In some cases, we have uncovered social security fraud and have made the appropriate referral to the United States Attorney's Office.

The U. S. Trustee believes that it is important to verify social security numbers to protect innocent third parties from both the intentional or inadvertent use of their social security numbers and to prevent bankruptcy fraud. The credit records of any individual whose social security number was used in a bankruptcy petition will reflect a bankruptcy filing, when in fact that individual may not have filed a bankruptcy case. The cost to correct the adverse credit history can be substantial. We believe that with your assistance we will be able to reduce the number of cases which are being filed with incorrect social security numbers.

We appreciate your cooperation in implementing this new policy. If you have any questions, please call your local Office of U.S. Trustee.